

RE-FRAMING THE UNITED STATES/MEXICO BORDER VIOLENCE
SITUATION: STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN PLANNING IN ACTION

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General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

RE-FRAMING THE UNITED STATES/MEXICO BORDER VIOLENCE SITUATION:
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This paper argues that to counter border spillover violence, America must control the border with Mexico and generate the public and political commitment to do so. This study applies a military problem solving methodology to identify how best to counter spillover violence. The methodology, which is described in a student text at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, enables the author to sift through the data of six prominent, recent studies which address the U.S.-Mexico drug problem. The conclusions and emphasis that arise from the methodology discern that border control, which is downplayed in the six prominent studies, should be--in fact--the U.S. government's critical focus.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
ACRONYMS	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Assumptions.....	5
Significance	7
Limitations	7
Delimitations.....	8
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Major Sources	9
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	17
Research Methodology	18
Strengths and Weaknesses	18
Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade	19
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS.....	26
Center of Gravity Analyses.....	26
The United States Perspective.....	26
Mexico's Perspective	33
DTO Perspective	37
Lines of Operation	40
United States Lines of Operation	42
Mexico Lines of Operation	44
DTO Lines of Operation	49

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	55
Conclusions.....	55
U.S. Commitment to Border Control.....	55
Demand Reduction in the United States	59
Unanswered Questions.....	60
Recommendations.....	62
Final Conclusion	62
GLOSSARY	64
REFERENCE LIST	65
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	68

ACRONYMS

CC	Critical Capabilities
CoG	Center of Gravity
CR	Critical Requirements
CV	Critical Vulnerabilities
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organizations
LOO	Lines of Operation
U.S.	United States

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Southwest Border Strategic Goals and Objectives of the United States.....	14
Figure 2. U.S. COG Analysis	22
Figure 3. U.S. Lines Of Operation Analysis	24
Figure 4. United States CoG Analysis.....	28
Figure 5. Mexican Cartel Presence in the United States	30
Figure 6. Mexico CoG Analysis.....	33
Figure 7. Drug Trafficking Organization CoG Analysis.....	37
Figure 8. United States Lines Of Operation	42
Figure 9. Mexico's Lines Of Operation	44
Figure 10. Drug Trafficking Organizations' Lines Of Operation	49

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

President Calderon has been very courageous in taking on these drug cartels. We've got to also take some steps. Even as he is doing more to deal with the drug cartels sending drugs into the United States, we need to do more to make sure that illegal guns and cash aren't flowing back to these cartels. That's part of what's financing their operations, that's part of what's arming them, that's what makes them so dangerous. And this is something that we take very seriously and we're going to continue to work on diligently in the months to come.

— President Barack H. Obama

This quote opens the introduction to the 2009 National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 1). It marks a call to increased action in order to more effectively address the spillover effects of Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs). The President called the United States to action during a response to two questions of significant importance to American military personnel. He was asked directly if the 'situation' along the U.S. and Mexican border comprised a threat to national security, and whether it would require the presence of 'national troops' on the border (CBS News 2009). The president did not answer these specific questions.

Instead, he outlined steps his administration had just announced to assist Mexico, and prevent or control the spillover of violence in the U.S. First, he identified increased financial and technical assistance. Next, he cited an increase of personnel along the border. Then, he mentioned coordination with Mexican Government. Finally, he spoke of a need to eliminate the flow of illegal arms and money to DTOs (CBS News 2009). While the President offered foresight into his administrations counternarcotics strategy, he did not address the two most important aspects of the problem with military

implications: is border violence spillover a threat to national security, and will military forces deploy to defend America from this violence?

President Obama's answers pointed to deficiencies within the government's approach to solving this complex problem. First, he indicated that the need for further assistance proved the United States' previous efforts insufficient. Second, he implied the United States was not willing to fully integrate all the instruments of national power toward solving this problem. Finally, he pointed to a need to change our strategy. These deficiencies lead to one overarching question: How can the U.S. improve its strategy to counter border spillover violence?

This paper argues that to counter border spillover violence, America must control the border with Mexico and generate the public and political commitment to do so. This study applies a military problem solving methodology to identify how best to counter spillover violence. The methodology, which is described in a student text at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, enables the author to sift through the data of six prominent, recent studies which address the U.S.-Mexico drug problem. The conclusions and emphasis that arise from the methodology discern that border control, which is downplayed in the six prominent studies, should be--in fact--the U.S. government's critical focus.

Southern border spillover violence in the U.S. garnered significant national attention in the recent past. A 2009 ABC news release dubbed Phoenix, Arizona, the "Kidnap Capital" of the U.S. This report stated that Phoenix stood second only to Mexico City for the most kidnappings in the world. The vast majority of these kidnappings were reportedly related to the illegal drug trade (Ross 2009). While this dubious moniker may

have had a sensational aspect generated for ratings, it was based upon truth. No American city has had more kidnappings in the recent past than Phoenix. Furthermore, the fact that only Mexico City recorded more kidnappings highlights the nature of this problem's relationship to the region's illegal drug trade.

Illegal drugs and their associated problems have plagued both Mexico and America for decades. Over time, the power and reach of DTOs grew seemingly unchecked. When Felipe Calderon became the President of Mexico in December 2006, the Mexican government drastically changed its approach to solving these problems. It began to actively engage DTOs and their forces to regain control of its country. Drastic measures have been taken to rid the government of corruption. Mexican Army and police forces risk their lives to battle DTOs in open combat. While this approach has undoubtedly offended some, it garnered the praise of the President of the United States. His words, taken at face value, imply approval of this aggressive method.

On the other hand, the U.S. government's more passive courses of action to combat Mexican DTOs and their spillover effects have appeared to a more benign effect. To date, American efforts have included governmental agency re-organization, a limited increase of physical presence on the border, and significant political gamesmanship. This approach contrasts with the Mexican government's approach. What has led to this disparity?

This work will analyze the two nations' efforts to solve this interrelated problem. Our interdependent solutions offer several areas for evaluation in which many questions must be asked and answered. First, one must apply critical reasoning to identify the underlying problem rather than merely components of the problem. This must occur from

all perspectives, including the DTO's. Second, this work will identify conditions which constitute each interested player's desired end state. More bluntly—what are the strategic goals? It will also ask whether these goals can be obtained. Finally, this thesis will discuss whether America can affect a better course of action. To accomplish this, this work will apply a framework taught to all military officers and government agency members who attend the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

Dr. Jack Kem, a professor in the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, outlined a problem solving method in a monograph entitled, "Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade". His purpose was simple: to provide basic tools for planning campaigns that win wars, thereby, "winning the peace" (Kem 2009, 1). This method applied critical reasoning and creative thinking to ends, ways, and means, and center of gravity analysis. This analysis would then lead to development of specific courses of action which follow logical lines of operations to achieve a desired end state (Kem 2009, Foreward). Above all, it provided a logical way to unify interagency and intergovernmental action to solve complex military problems.

His work offered other applications outside solely military operations. It provided a sound framework within which to view, analyze, and solve problems that may be of a more strategic nature. This work will apply the problem solving methods outlined in Campaign Planning to America's strategic 'situation' on its southwest border. First, it will collect currently existing literature available. Next, it will explain and relate Dr. Kem's published methodology to the spillover phenomenon. It will then analyze the

problem within the campaign planning framework. Finally, it will propose courses of action as identified by the analysis.

Assumptions

The first and most important assumption of this study is that the governments of the U.S. and Mexico truly desire to solve this problem. This effort requires honest brokers within both governmental bodies to succeed. Issues deemed too politically controversial often receive diluted or ineffective countermeasures. These measures have no hope of solving the problem. This work dismisses political expediency to offer a legitimate solution.

Next, this study assumes illegal drugs will remain illegal. This situation could change in several ways. The most obvious would be if either Mexico or the U.S., or both venture in legalizing what are currently illegal drugs. Speculation as to the specific effects could be nearly endless and would yield little value for this discussion. However, in the unlikely case of specific drug legalization, one must assume that not all currently illegal drugs would become legal and therefore regulated. As such, drug cartels would still have a demand for an illegal product to produce, transport and protect.

The illegality of the drug market forces its economy into violently competitive underground markets. According to BalancedPolitics.org, proponents argue legalization would lower price, reduce crime, generate revenue, and starve DTOs of their ability to generate resources. For the legalization argument to be successful, it must be applied to all illegal drugs.

The Schaffer Library of Drug Policy offers another analysis. Their website contends that complete legalization of all drugs poses several serious problems. First, one

can argue that crime would increase. If drug costs were lower, addiction rates would skyrocket [as seen with the introduction of crack cocaine]. This surge in addicts would lead to increases in both purchase-related crime and drug-induced crime. Second, to defeat underground markets, legalization must be absolute. In short, there can be no restrictions whatsoever. Restrictions of any kind, such as age requirements for purchase, create black markets. Further, taxing drugs for governmental profit also creates a black market for drug producers looking for greater profit margins. Finally, reality suggests that DTOs would not sit idly by while another manufacturer legally impedes upon their market share.

Given these arguments, legalization holds no merit. As such, this study will assume all currently illegal drugs will remain illegal. Thus, it cannot, and will not consider illegality as part of the problem, nor legalization of drugs as part of the solution.

Another assumption is that the propensity for violence which has long surrounded the world of illegal drugs will continue. The incredible amount of money involved in the drug trade attracts many who are inclined to stop at nothing in their quest for personal gain. This fact leads one to logically conclude that this fundamental aspect will remain.

A final assumption is a limited impact of the current crackdown by Mexican authorities. Violence has appeared to increase during President Calderon's war on drugs within Mexico. While many cartel members have been killed or captured, cartel members and their associated gangs have engaged in an increasingly violent turf war. As a result, they often kill each other. This situation cannot sustain itself indefinitely; one would assume that the cartels, the Police, and the Army forces would eventually run out of personnel to kill. However, the depth and breadth leads one to logically assume that

President Calderon's aggressive course of action will not solve the drug problem in the near future.

Significance

The importance of this research lies primarily in advocating a comprehensive method to frame problems of national importance. Should this analysis prove valuable by using trans-national drug related crime along the U.S. and Mexico border as an example, it offers a holistic approach to solve America's problems. The U.S. government, with its numerous bureaus, departments, and agencies involved in this situation, may better address larger issues by implementing Kem's Campaign Planning model.

In addition to the nearly 500 National Guard members who were already conducting counterdrug missions along the border with Mexico, Operation Jump Start added roughly 2,500 additional Guardsmen to protect the border from June 2006 to July 2008 (Smith 2006). As narco-violence periodically re-emerges as a focal point of international relations, the impact to America's military may be large. If violence persists, or the border situation deteriorates, the National Guard may establish regular deployment rotations to the region. United States Northern Command, tasked with defending America's homeland, may also see significant asset and personnel increases. Regardless of the results, military members always need to know themselves, know their enemy, but most importantly, know how best to defeat their enemy.

Limitations

This study's primary task is to apply Kem's *Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade* to a problem of strategic importance to the U.S. It will assess the value of applying

this whole of government problem solving approach beyond military operational level campaigns. It will not only propose a holistic method to view the Narco-violence problems associated with the U.S. / Mexico border, it will propose lines of operation and strategic objectives to achieve our desired end-state.

Delimitations

Several key delimitations will be observed to remain within the scope of this thesis. First, while thousands of sources are available, a point of diminishing returns can be easily reached. This study will limit the number of sources for campaign planning analysis to six, each no more than two years old. None of these sources will include media releases to avoid sensationalism. These sources will intentionally overlap the time period of the 2008 Presidential election to avoid perception of political bias, and to demonstrate the ongoing nature of the problem, regardless of politics. This number of sources will also avoid unnecessary duplication, yet allow for a broad enough sample to ensure reliable, current information. Other sources will be used to provide complementary information. Next, this is not a historical analysis of the evolution of the spillover problem. It addresses current realities. Finally, this work will not analyze past failures or successes, but may include them as points of reference.

In the next chapter, I will summarize the six major sources used throughout the study. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used to examine the problem. Chapter 4 covers analysis of gathered information, and chapter 5 will offer conclusions and recommendations to solve the problem.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Illegal drug related spillover violence threatens America. Mexican DTO's have established drug trafficking and distribution networks across much of the United States (Cook 2008, 4). In addition to affecting lives along the international border, this violence now affects hundreds of cities across America (McCaffrey 2007, 3). This situation did not develop overnight; it became deeply engrained into Mexican and American culture over time. These continuing problems point to continuing strategic failure to properly address them. How can the U.S. improve its strategy to counter drug related border spillover violence?

This chapter summarizes the six major informational sources used during this study. It is organized by source, rather than by topic. These sources were used to develop specific assessments from the perspectives of the U.S., Mexico, and the DTOs; other sources were used to provide additional supportive information.

Major Sources

As listed on its website, the U.S. Congressional Research Service, “. . . provides Congress with the vital, analytical support it needs to address the most complex public policy issues facing the nation.” It assists members of Congress and congressional committees during every stage of the legislative process by providing comprehensive analysis of issues. Of its many reports, one in particular covered the Mexican Drug cartels.

This report provided an overview of Mexican drug cartels, their operations, and their ties to gangs. It also covered their evolution and the extent to which these organizations have infiltrated deep into the societies of both Mexico and the U.S. This report provided an overview of the Mexican government's efforts to counter these cartels and their effects. Finally, it examined selected historic and proposed policies to solve drug trafficking and drug related violence problems (Cook 2008, 1-22). This report was published before the Brookings Institute issued its own study which proposed solutions of its own.

The Brookings Institute described itself on its website as a Washington, D.C. based, not-for-profit, public policy organization. Its mission, “. . . is to conduct high-quality, independent research and, based on that research, to provide innovative, practical recommendations that advance three broad goals: strengthen American democracy; foster the economic and social welfare, security and opportunity of all Americans; secure a more open, safe, prosperous and cooperative international system.”

In August 2009, The Brookings Institute released a report on drug violence in Mexico. It began by citing the differences between publicly available data and information offered by Mexican government officials (speaking anonymously) regarding the casualties of drug related violence. The report continued with the effects this violence has had upon Mexican society, and explained how these effects have crossed the international border. To combat these problems, it proposed three policy positions: Reducing U.S. and global consumption, rerouting the drug trade from Mexico, and suppressing crime in Mexico to manageable levels (Felbab-Brown 2009, 1-3).

General McCaffrey, U.S. Army (Retired), former Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, visited Mexico in December 2008 to attend the first three-day meeting of the International Forum of Intelligence and Security Specialists. This forum acted as an advisory body to Mexican federal law enforcement leadership. Representatives from Mexico, The U.S., and Canada comprised the majority of attendees, while representatives of Columbia, the United Kingdom, Spain, India, and Germany also attended (McCaffrey 2008, 1-3).

In his after-action report, Gen McCaffrey cited the situation in Mexico as an increasingly violent internal struggle against DTOs. These criminal organizations have intimidated society, corrupted a significant number of law enforcement officials, and established a lawless environment. Uncorrupted Army and police forces became targets of kidnapping, torture, murder, and mutilation. As such, chaos reigned in Mexican border-states and cities, and drug criminality has spread beyond the border region to over 295 U.S. cities (McCaffrey 2008, 3).

Gen McCaffrey assessed the most effective tools to the cartels were narco-terrorism, corruption, and intimidation. He also claimed the U.S. compounds the overall problem through its, “. . . ineffective and unresponsive to Mexican concerns about weapons, bulk cash, and precursor chemicals flowing south into Mexico from the United States-- with a blow torch effect on the security of the Mexican people” (McCaffrey 2008, 7).

The General closed by summarizing strategic solutions. First, he restated how President Calderon set a “bold and heroic” path to clean up Mexico. He then stated the importance of the opportunity for the incoming Obama administration to ally itself with

the Calderon administration, to immediately focus on, and commit to fully resource a strategy which addresses the problems in Mexico. He also cited the strategy of Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora to break up the four major DTOs into fifty or more smaller entities. Finally, he spoke of the importance of the Merida Initiative. While he considered the initiative slowly implemented and underfunded, he cited it as a vital program (McCaffrey 2008, 8).

In his work, *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and other Illicit Transnational Criminal organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Brazil*, Dr. Max Manwaring has dedicated a significant amount of time to the study of gangs and their effects on national governance. He spoke of another kind of conflict within the context of Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" being waged throughout the world, and more specifically, the Americas. The protagonists, in this instance the proponents of a political cause, consist of various levels of street gangs and their allies in what he calls Transnational Criminal Organizations. Examples of these organizations are mafia families, warlords, and drug traffickers (Manwaring 2008, 1). The antagonists, those struggling and competing against their political cause, are the nations in which the protagonists operate. "What makes all of this into another type of contemporary conflict is that the national security and the effective sovereignty of affected countries are being impinged every day, and illicit motives are, in fact, becoming an ominous political agenda" (Manwaring 2008, 2). These agendas to neutralize, control, or overthrow sitting governments present the problem.

Manwaring cited protagonists' [DTOs] crime, violence, and instability as merely symptoms of the strategic level threat. Their ultimate threat was one of two options: state

failure; or violent imposition of a complete state restructuring to align that state with DTO values (Manwaring 2008, 11).

Several key lessons about DTOs were highlighted: their contributions to national, regional and global instability; the fact that DTOs are not apolitical; DTOs care only about group survival and personal gain, and will use any ways and means to reach their ends; and DTOs seek freedom of action within and across national boundaries. To counter the intended and unintended effects of DTO actions, Manwaring stated the U.S. and its allies must apply all the instruments of national power (Manwaring 2008, 48).

To apply the instruments of national power, the current Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy issued its National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy in June 2009. As required by Public Law 109-469, this strategy document outlined the government's strategy to prevent illegal drug trafficking across the border; stated the roles of National Drug Control Program agencies; and identified specific resources required to enable these agencies to implement the strategy (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 1). It openly listed its strategic goals and objectives (see figure 1) in the introduction, and repeated them at the opening of each of its nine themed chapters (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 2).

STRATEGIC GOAL

Substantially reduce the flow of illicit drugs, drug proceeds, and associated instruments of violence across the Southwest border.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Enhance intelligence capabilities associated with the Southwest border.
2. Interdict drugs, drug proceeds, and associated instruments of violence at the ports of entry, between the ports of entry, and in the air and maritime domains along the Southwest border.
3. Ensure the prosecution of all significant drug trafficking, money laundering, bulk currency, and weapons smuggling/trafficking cases.
4. Disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations.
5. Enhance counterdrug technologies for drug detection and interdiction along the Southwest border.
6. Enhance U.S. – Mexico cooperation regarding joint counterdrug efforts.

Figure 1. Southwest Border Strategic Goals and Objectives of the United States
Source: Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 2.

Chapter 1 began by covering the importance of enhanced intelligence and information sharing between agencies within the U.S. It also stressed the importance of improved coordination of intelligence and information sharing between Mexico and the U.S. (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 5-6). Chapters 2 and 3 covered actions at, and between legal points of entry respectively. Forty-three legitimate points of entry span the border between the two countries. Between them are thousands of miles of open desert, mountains, the Rio Grande River, and maritime transit lanes which offer opportunities for uncontrolled international operations (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 9-15). Chapter 4 covered strategies to counter air and marine threats to the U.S.; chapter 5 outlined the critical elements to improved investigation and prosecution (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 17-24).

The next chapters identified efforts necessary to combat bulk cash smuggling and money laundering, and efforts to combat illegal arms smuggling to Mexico (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009 25-36). The penultimate chapter discussed technology requirements to ensure future success (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 37-40). Chapter 9 focused on the importance of continued cooperation with Mexico as a whole (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 41-43).

Following chapter 9, the strategy addressed methods to detect and counter tunneling between Mexico and the U.S., and finished by spending considerable effort identifying and directing resources toward implementation of the strategy as a whole (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 45-65). These resources were allocated to directly impact the worsening situation along the border.

In August 2008, the Overseas Security Advisory Council released its crime and safety report on Ciudad Juarez, a city hit especially hard by drug related crime. It described the overall level of crime in the city immediately across the border from El Paso, Texas, as generally high due specifically to drug related murder, torture, robbery, theft and other crimes. The article summarized specific threats to individuals, offered advice for use of public and private transportation, and warned of the pitfalls of reliance on police and emergency services. Most importantly, it outlined personal protection measures, and reminded its readers that the crime and safety situation in Juarez (as with the remainder of Mexico) varies from one location to another (OSAC 2008, 1-6).

As indicated by the Overseas Security Advisory Council website, this body promotes security cooperation between American business and private sector interests

worldwide, and the U.S. Department of State. The council is a Federal Advisory Committee whose actions are in the public interest and relate to the overseas security functions of the Department of State.

The foregoing studies and reports have merit due to their prominence and recent publication. Chapter 3 describes a problem solving methodology that has applicability to military strategic, operational, and tactical situations. In chapter 4, the study undertakes an analysis of the drug problem by applying this military methodology to a national-level strategic problem. Surprisingly, the study finds that this military methodology has the potential of helping the civilian policymaker to suggest a mix of policy recommendations not contained in the six studies and reports.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The enemy we fought in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) was not the enemy we expected. The enemy in Somalia was not the enemy we expected, and the same can be said for the fights the US military has fought for the last 50 years. The fight, however, is even bigger than just considering paramilitary forces or insurgents on the battlefield. The fight takes place on territory that includes people who will be lining in the same territory long after the US military has left. The fight also includes refugees and displaced persons who must be dealt with by someone; the fight includes institutions that must be rebuilt so that some measure of normalcy exists for the future; the fight includes the infrastructure that must be rebuilt or transformed because of the ravages of war (and in many circumstances because of the roots and causes of the conflict). Today, victory in combat does not necessarily lead to victory in the conflict, which enlarges the implications of combat operations. Planning, wargaming and executing campaigns must consider all of these implications.

— Dr. Jack Kem

This study applies tailored aspects of Kem's *Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade*, 3rd edition, to a strategic problem facing the U.S. His monograph serves as a whole of government approach to solving operational level problems facing today's military. Given its military audience, the entire work will not apply to this study of a national strategic level problem.

His method offers a way to consider all the implications of countering the effects of drug related spillover violence threatening America, the importance of which is described above. Ultimately, this project will analyze the applicability of Kem's method as a way not only to improve U.S. strategy to counter drug related border spillover violence, but also whether it could apply to other strategic level problems as well.

This chapter summarizes the research methods used during this study. It identifies how sources were both selected and used. It also identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the research. Following these items, a review of the pertinent aspects of Kem's

Campaign Planning monograph explains how the collected data is organized into logical components.

The remaining chapters will answer questions from chapter 1. Conclusions and recommendations will come from analysis of the models from all three perspectives (U.S., Mexico, and DTO), as well as analysis of the published National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy.

Research Methodology

The problem posed by the primary question of improving U.S. government strategy to counter drug related spillover violence requires looking at the study from different points of view. As such, the problem will be analyzed from the U.S., Mexican, as well as the Drug Trafficking Organization's perspectives. The Campaign Planning method provides a framework for data analysis to accomplish this task. Major sources, documents from government organizations or credible non-profit sources, were used to form the analyses models from the three perspectives.

Countless news media articles, magazines, and blogs offer amplifying information relating to this project. As a rule, these types of sources were omitted from consideration for use as major sources to determine the components of each perspective of the issue. These sources were used in a supporting evidential role.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The primary strength of this methodology is its inclusion of U.S., Mexico, and DTO perspectives. In order to solve this problem, the U.S. Government must look at it through the eyes of all involved. It must analyze the situation of each participant to

identify logical courses of action and desired outcomes. Another strength of this methodology is the emerging use of the Campaign Planning method throughout the Command and General Staff College as an approved method to solve complex military problems on an operational level.

The primary weakness of this paper is its reliance on English language sources. While the illicit nature of the drug trade makes obtaining an insider's view of the nature of Mexican DTOs difficult to obtain, Spanish language sources may have provided additional information of both the Mexican Government's and DTO's perspective.

Another weakness is the unclassified nature of the research. This eliminates from consideration any sensitive information not releasable to the public. This weakness is overcome by focusing on selected open sources which contain an overwhelming amount of reliable, rather than speculative or sensationalistic, information to more than adequately answer the primary question.

Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade

Kem's monograph provided the framework for problem solving used for this project. His work compiled both Joint and Army doctrine documents, published monographs for the School of Advanced Military Studies and the U.S. Marine Corps War College, as well as Army leaders' experiences during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. It was designed to provide planning tools, which extend beyond merely the war-fighting aspects, and encompass all aspects of a problem to ultimately win both the war and the peace (Kem 2009, 129).

Kem boils his work down into three primary steps: Identify the problem, identify the solution, and assess whether the solution answered the problem (Kem 2009, 5). These steps form the foundation of his problem solving method in its most basic terms.

In the first step, the importance of identifying the actual problem is highlighted. One must not become distracted by the problem's symptoms, or merely focused on its parts and pieces (Kem 2009, 5). When dealing with complex problems one must avoid the instinct to rush into action. Considerable time and critical reasoning to identify the real problem must occur prior to concentration on the solution. This initial (and most critical) step focuses follow-on effort at determining solutions (Kem 2009, 5).

Problem solving, the second step outlined in the campaign planning process, focuses on ends, ways, and means, and the relationships between them. The ends, or end state defines the purpose for the campaign; the ways represent the methods used to achieve the ends; the means are the resources used to achieve the ends (Kem 2009, 16). The relationships between ends, ways, and means link actions taken to the overarching purpose for taking them (Kem 2009, 16).

Continuing step two (problem solving), one must identify and analyze all players' Center(s) of Gravity (CoG) and their critical characteristics. These characteristics comprise the components of the CoG assessment. They are: the Center(s) of Gravity themselves, their Critical Capabilities, Critical Requirements, and Critical Vulnerabilities. The CoG is the physical or moral entity which provides strength or power. The CoG is the principal source of resistance to the enemy achieving its end state. Typically, at the strategic level the CoG is a determined leader or populace (Kem 2009, 25).

The CoG has Critical Capabilities (CCs), or the ability to act in a manner which causes concern to its opponent. This could also be stated as what the CoG can physically do to interfere with its opponent's operations. These capabilities have Critical Requirements (CRs), “. . . essential condition[s], resource[s], and means for a Critical Capability to be fully operational” (Kem 2009, 73).

These CRs have Critical Vulnerabilities (CVs), or weaknesses susceptible to attack which will create significant effect. Knowing the enemy's vulnerabilities allows targeting operations to achieve objectives which lead to the desired end state. Proper self-identification of own vulnerabilities also leads to operations to protect or eliminate them. Identifying each of these components would lead to operations which maximize one's own capabilities and protect one's vulnerabilities, all while exploiting the vulnerabilities of the enemy. For ease of understanding, these components can be graphically displayed. Figure 3 depicts the organization of the components of the U.S. CoG assessment.

United States CoG Analysis

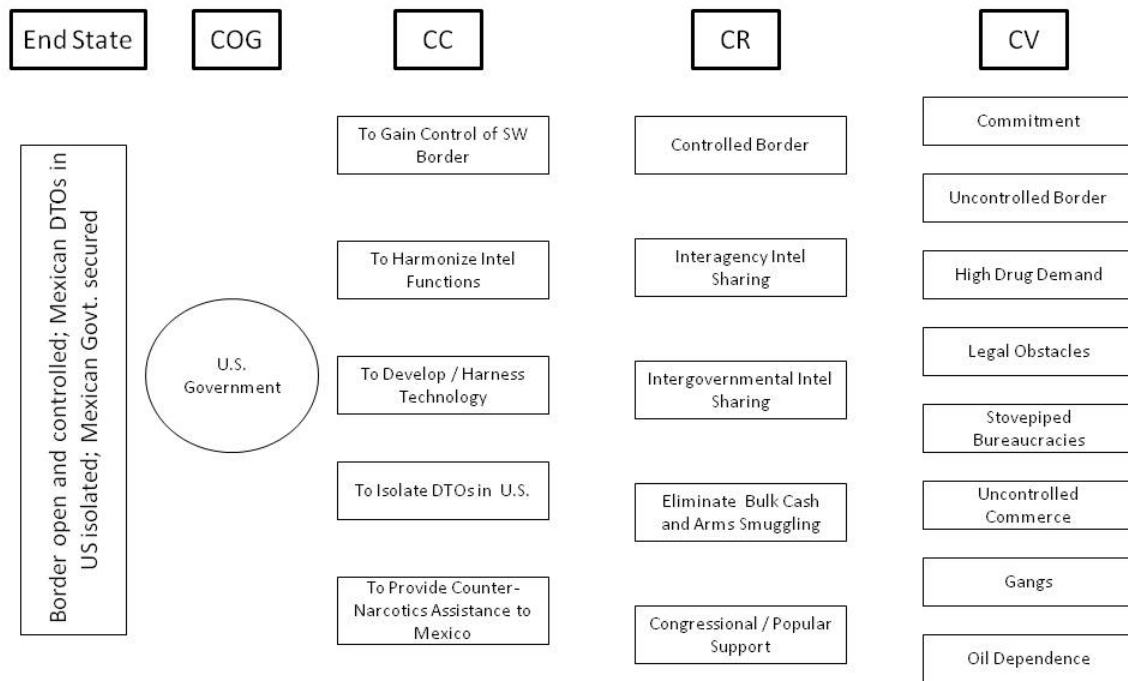


Figure 2. U.S. COG Analysis

Source: Created by author.

Definitions hold importance in this model. First, to reach the National Strategic End State, one must understand how this term is used. Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning, defines National Strategic End State as, “ . . . the broadly expressed conditions that should exist at the end of a campaign or operation.” It continues, “Often this end state is uncertain, difficult to determine with clarity, or an estimate based on assumptions and unpredictable conditions in the operational environment. In some situations, operations must begin before a clear understanding of the end state is determined” (Joint Publication 5-0 2006, III-5). The end state may even shift during operations, but should remain relatively consistent (Kem 2009, 17). Within this end state;

however, strategic objectives must be outlined such that achievement of these objectives should result in reaching the end state (Kem 2009, 20). This definition will be discussed further in chapter 4.

Further, Kem stresses that CCs in this model are the *ways*. As actions the CoG can take, capabilities are verbs. This view differs from Joint Doctrine which describes CCs as the means (Kem 2009, 73-74). CRs are the *means*, or resources used in a course of action. As such, they are nouns. One final definition holds importance: that of Logical Lines of Operation (LOO). Kem spends much energy breaking down the differences in service nomenclature, but ultimately settles on the joint term, Logical Lines of Operation. In short, a LOO refers to a depiction of a logical arrangement of objectives, effects, or tasks (Joint Publication 5-0 2006, IV-21). Kem, relying heavily on a monograph written by Major Mario A. Diaz, defines them as a way to arrange simultaneous, often dissimilar actions linked by a common purpose (Kem 2009, 55-56).

It is also important to acknowledge the difference between objectives and goals. Joint Publication 1-02 defines an objective as clearly defined, decisive and achievable (Joint Publication 1-02 2008, 391). Joint Publication 5-0 describes the importance of clear, unambiguous strategic objectives (JP-5 2006, III-8). Kem adds, “To me, an objective is something that must be met; you either achieve an objective or you fail. You reach for goals; you must meet objectives” (Kem 2009, 20). This study will use Kem’s distinction between goals and objectives. These definitions help one understand this problem solving method. They further enable one to critically analyze problems and proposed solutions, and to interpret CoG and LOO analyses.

Continuing this analysis, LOOs must be established which take advantage of the opponent's CVs. These LOOs allow planners to incorporate holistic approaches to complex operations which target the enemy COG, while simultaneously protecting the friendly COG (Kem 2009, 31, 67). They enable operators to visualize how their actions contribute to achieving the desired end state by quickly communicating intent, and focusing efforts (Kem 2009, 65-67). Figure 4 shows the proposed LOOs for U.S. operations to counter spillover violence.

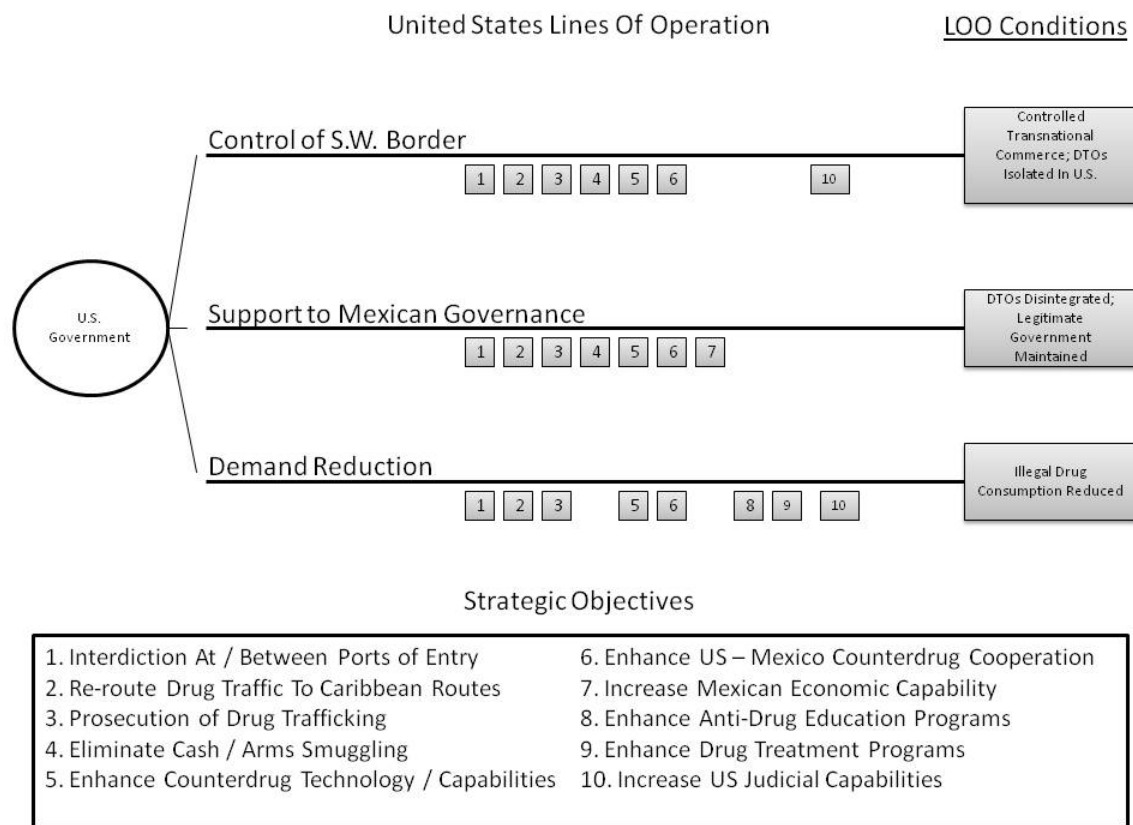


Figure 3. U.S. Lines Of Operation Analysis
Source: Created by author.

Step three of the problem solving method consists of assessment. One must continuously ask himself two questions: Are we doing things correctly; and, are we doing the correct things? These questions relate to measures of performance and measures of effectiveness, respectively. Measures of performance tend to be quantitative in nature, internally focused, and relate to task accomplishment. Measures of effectiveness, however, relate to the purposes of those tasks. Thus they are qualitative in nature, and are externally focused on whether our tasks are helping us reach our end state (Kem 2009, 117-121). Continual assessment throughout operations allows plans to evolve as the situation changes.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Chapter 3 focused on the methodology used in this study, and followed with a descriptive discussion of the campaign planning method in which the data collected will be viewed. This chapter will apply this data to determine if this model can improve the U.S. strategy to counter its drug-related spillover violence problem. Detailed explanations follow each CoG and LOO analysis to portray the intricate pieces of the problem, as well as how these pieces fit together.

First, as seen in the previous chapter, this chapter contains a Center of Gravity analysis of the drug-related spillover violence from the U.S. perspective. The same assessment follows from Mexico's viewpoint, then from the standpoint of the Drug Trafficking Organizations. Amplifying data will follow each figure.

Following these Center Of Gravity analyses, Lines of Operation analyses from each perspective will be presented. These figures provide a glimpse into how each entity involved will focus its efforts to accomplish the listed strategic objectives.

Center of Gravity Analyses

The United States Perspective

Campaign Planning emphasizes as its first step that one must identify the true problem. This study's original question was simple: How can the U.S. improve its strategy to counter drug-related border spillover violence? First, one must ask why America has drug related spillover violence problems to begin with. What caused them?

According to the Brookings Institute, drug turf wars are spreading across America (Felbab-Brown 2009, 2). Street gangs vie for control of neighborhoods within America's major cities. To operate, these gangs need resources. As gangs grow and undertake more complex operations, they have a higher need for resources. These resources are provided by the drug trade. To continue problem identification, again, one must examine the reason for these turf wars.

The resources generated from the drug trade are tremendous. This leads to intense competition for control within and between gangs. As one examines why there is such value to drugs, a couple answers emerge: First, their illegal nature inflates their value. This contributes not only to their value, but to the methods in which the drugs and their related products must use to be delivered. Perhaps more importantly, America has a significant demand, and a largely unfettered supply of illegal drugs.

Again, when the above points are probed further, we approach the true problem. America's seemingly insatiable appetite for drugs, combined with its substantial resources with which to acquire them, and its proximity to their source offer opportunities to generate tremendous wealth. This situation exists because America has not stopped importation of illegal drugs into the country.

Examining the components of the problem identify areas for correction which all relate to answer the specific problem. Without continuously examining the components to get to their root, one may overly concentrate on the components themselves. Solving one component may exacerbate others, adding new complexity to the problem itself.

In this case, drug-related spillover violence from Mexico relates directly to America's high demand for and supplies of illegal drugs, and its proximity to Mexico.

While the second condition cannot be changed, the first can. As we have determined, drug-related spillover violence is merely a symptom of the overall problem. Treating our current spillover violence symptoms without curing the overall illness will not necessarily prevent our symptoms from recurring. We must therefore concentrate on solving the true problem: America's high supply of, and its demand for illegal drugs.

United States CoG Analysis

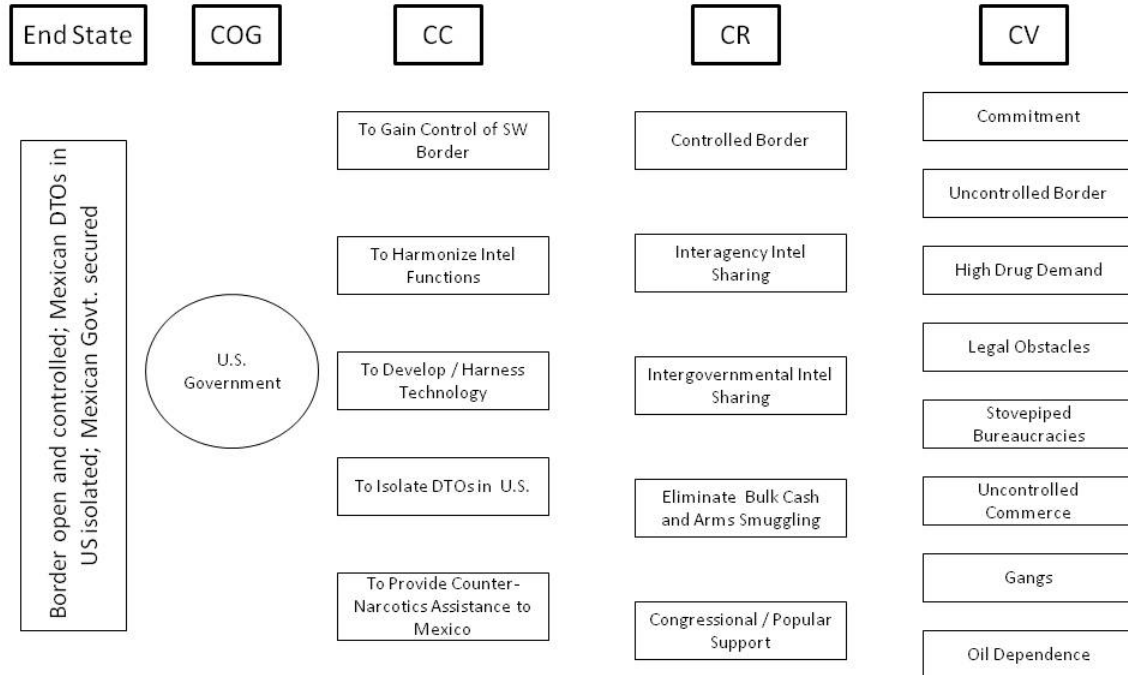


Figure 4. United States CoG Analysis

Source: Created by author.

End State-The U.S. end state would have the southern border open with access and commerce controlled. Civil order is the established norm and the Mexican DTOs

operating within the U.S. would be denied access to capabilities which enable them to exercise influence or freedom of action (Kem 2009, 41-42). The Mexican government would remain stable and secured from DTO coercion and action.

Center of Gravity-The American CoG is the American Government. The President sets the courses of action for the nation; the Legislative branch appropriates funds and enacts laws that set the courses of action into motion. It is important to mention that both derive their will to address this problem from the American people

Critical Capabilities-To Control the Southwest Border-America is the only entity involved in this study that has the ability to control access to the border. This includes inspection of all personal and vehicular traffic, and commercial imports traveling to and from Mexico. While measures have been enacted to increase this capability, more can and should be done.

To Harmonize Intelligence Functions-America must harmonize intelligence functions among the Intelligence Community and law enforcement agencies to enhance overall intelligence capabilities (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 6).

To Develop/Harness Technology-America must continue to use the most advanced technologies for detection and interdiction of drugs along the border (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 37).

To Isolate DTOs in the U.S.-Street gang activity within the U.S. must be disrupted. Large numbers of gang members involved in drug trafficking (and its related violence) are illegally in the country. Law enforcement must actively address the gang threat (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 36). The Mexican DTOs

with an established presence in major cities throughout the U.S. must be isolated (see figure 5). These drug organizations must not be allowed continued freedom of action.



Figure 5. Mexican Cartel Presence in the United States

Source: Colleen W. Cook, CRS Report for Congress, *Mexico's Drug Cartels* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 6.

To Provide Counternarcotics Assistance to Mexico-Throughout the National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, a common theme emerges: The U.S. must increase counter-narcotics assistance to Mexico (U.S. Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009). In doing so, we must honor and support the independent governance of Mexico, by providing more than our heretofore “modest” (McCaffrey 2007, 4) support. The Merida Initiative, a \$1.4B program authored by the Canadian, Mexican, and American Presidents, provides what McCaffrey calls a drop in the bucket

when compared to the expenses of Iraq and Afghanistan. This program was bitterly and insultingly argued in the U.S. Congress, and won only narrow approval for funding (McCaffrey 2007, 4).

Critical Requirements-Controlled Border--The U.S. must control access to and passage across its border with Mexico.

Interagency Intelligence Sharing--The American intelligence and law enforcement communities must efficiently communicate with each other to combat the intricate web of DTO organizations in the country.

Intergovernmental intelligence sharing--Intelligence sharing between Mexico and the U.S. increases cooperation and support to a unified front against the DTOs.

Eliminate Bulk Cash and Arms Smuggling--The U.S. must eliminate bulk cash and arms smuggling across the border. Eliminating cash smuggling strips DTOs of their resources. This is of such importance that the counternarcotics strategy call for, “. . . the application of all other strategic and tactical assets to prevent the crossborder movement of illicit proceeds” (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 26). While disagreements exist regarding the extent to which American-bought weapons are arming Mexican DTOs, there is no doubt some of their weaponry originates in America.

Congressional and popular support--This support is critical for substantial and decisive action.

Critical Vulnerabilities-Commitment--*Most Critical* This vulnerability encompasses political, judicial, and societal aspects. Without complete commitment, the problem will never be solved.

Uncontrolled Border--*Most Critical* While there are roughly one million legal border crossings a day, there are an estimated one million illegal crossings a year (McCaffrey 2009, 5). This allows a substantial amount of people and their wares freedom of action.

High Drug Demand--the U.S. is the primary market for illegal drugs in the Western hemisphere.

Legal Obstacles--U.S. Supreme Court rulings have caused numerous appeals of convictions, and have led prosecutors to drop investigations (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 27). Maritime law restricts U.S. officials from boarding Mexican vessels suspected of carrying drugs (Cook 2008, 20). Use of the Armed Forces in the war on drugs has proven a controversial issue when viewed in light of the Posse Comitatus Act.

Stove-piped Bureaucracies--Organizations have evolved without integration. As a result, “data sharing is hampered by the lack of common equipment and operating systems” (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 19).

Uncontrolled Commerce--American personnel currently lack a portable, wearable, self contained unit to detect contraband. America also lacks the capability to screen all cargo containers for contraband (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 38). This allows opportunity for international bulk cash and drug shipments.

Gangs--Gangs contribute to local, regional, national and global instability. As they grow, they wreak havoc across larger areas (Manwaring 2007, 48).

Oil Dependence--Mexico supplies a third of America's oil imports, and has tremendous known reserves of natural gas. Our economies are inter-dependent. Economic interaction cannot simply be severed.

American vulnerabilities offer rich targets for DTO actions. Comprehensive counterdrug operations aimed at securing American vulnerabilities and assisting Mexico in securing hers, while simultaneously exploiting the vulnerabilities of the DTOs must be enacted. Otherwise, these operations will not succeed.

Mexico's Perspective

Mexico CoG Analysis

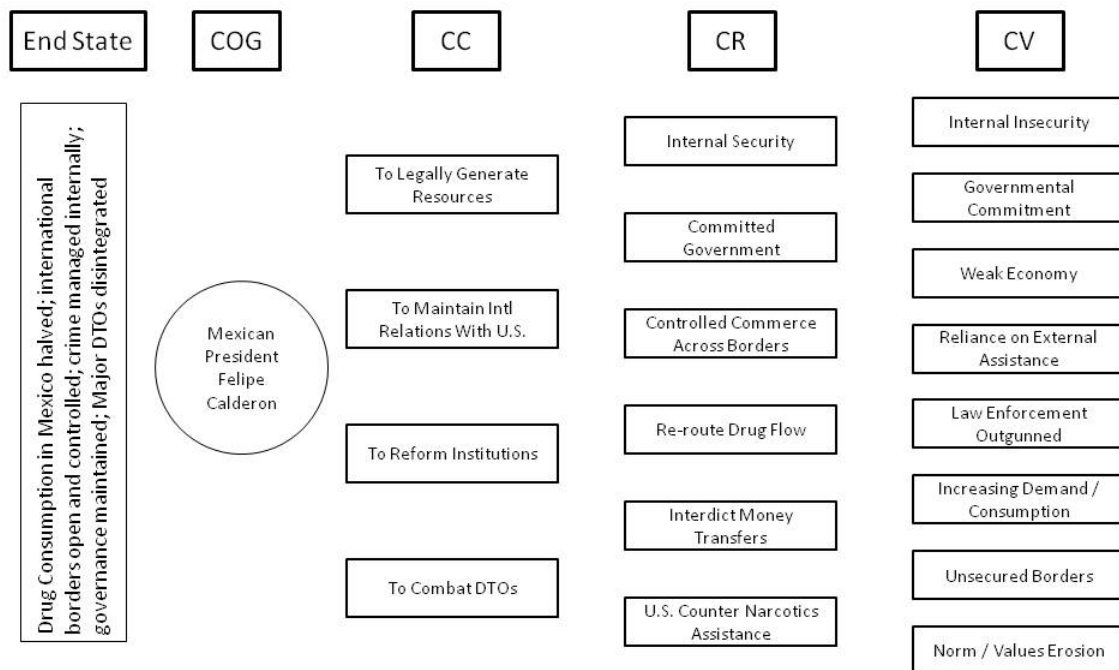


Figure 6. Mexico CoG Analysis

Source: Created by author.

End State-Drug consumption in Mexico must be significantly reduced and both international borders must be open and controlled. The major DTOs must be disintegrated so that crime can be handled by internal functions. Finally the rule of law in Mexico must be maintained and enforced by the Mexican government and its established civic services.

Center of Gravity-Mexican President Felipe Calderon set a course of confrontation of the DTOs to re-capture control of the country.

Critical Capabilities-To Legally Generate Resources--The Mexican economy stands as the 12th largest economy in the world. Its inextricable ties to the U.S. economy combined with substantial natural resources offer continued federal revenue generation (McCaffrey 2007, 4).

To Maintain a Positive Relationship with the U.S.--The mutual interests between nations create an atmosphere conducive to solving mutual problems.

To Reform Institutions--Institutional and reforms were announced by the Mexican Attorney General in April 2007 (Cook 2008, 17).

To Combat DTOs--The Mexican President has the constitutional authority, the military forces, and the will to confront DTOs.

Critical Requirements-Internal Security--Societal, political, and economic security must be established and maintained.

Committed Government--The Calderon administration must maintain its commitment to anti-DTO operations.

Controlled Commerce Across Borders--While Mexico remains unable to independently meet this requirement, controlled commerce between all nations bordering Mexico is vital.

Re-route Drug Flow--Forcing South American DTOs to re-route their drug exports to the Caribbean routes will significantly reduce Mexican DTO resource generation capability.

Interdict Money Transfers--Mexico and its allies must interdict electronic and physical money transfers to eliminate DTO resources.

U.S. Counternarcotics Assistance--Mexico is a proud nation. It must swallow some pride, and overcome its “. . . paranoid fixation on perceived injustice of U.S. arrogance and imperialism and animosity toward bi-national cooperation with any policy initiatives dealing with border issues, water, migration, and security or law enforcement cooperation” (McCaffrey 2007, 4) to truly solve its national security problems (Cook 2008, 21).

Critical Vulnerabilities-Internal Insecurity--*Most Critical* The state cannot fulfill its obligations to establish and preserve individual and collective security (Manwaring 2007, 30; Overseas Security Advisory Council 2008). Contributing tremendously to this problem is pervasive corruption. Corruption of government officials has become so thorough it led a Secretary of Finance under President Carlos Salinas de Gortari to state, “Without any euphemisms, the country does what the narco-traffickers want” (Manwaring 2007, 30).

Governmental Commitment--In the event of public dissatisfaction with current Anti-DTO policy, the Calderon Administration could face tremendous pressure to cease these operations.

Weak Economy--Local economies in areas most influenced by DTO action have suffered tremendously (Felbab-Brown 2009, 2).

Reliance on External Assistance--The Mexican government cannot solve their DTO problem without U.S. assistance (Cook 2008, 21).

Law Enforcement Outgunned--DTOs employ an arsenal of military equipment and tactics to overwhelm law enforcement (McCaffrey 2008, 6).

Increased Demand/Consumption--The prevalence of drugs throughout the country has increased drug consumption in Mexico, where prevention, treatment, and demand reduction programs are lacking (Felbab-Brown 2009, 2).

Unsecured Borders--In addition to its northern border, Mexico's southern borders contribute to substantial weapons and drug smuggling (Office of the National Drug Control Policy 2009, 30).

Norms/Values Erosion--DTO's violent criminality has "barbarized" (Manwaring 2007, 32) acceptable human behavior.

The capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities identified above offer a multifaceted challenge for Mexico and the U.S. They extend well beyond mitigating or eliminating spillover violence. As previously shown, the root cause of spillover violence is America's high demand for and supply of illegal drugs. One must solve this overarching problem first. Our two countries share this common problem, and neither can

solve it without the other. “We must jointly and respectfully cooperate to address the broad challenges our two nations face” (McCaffrey 2007, 8).

DTO Perspective

Drug Trafficking Organizations CoG Analysis

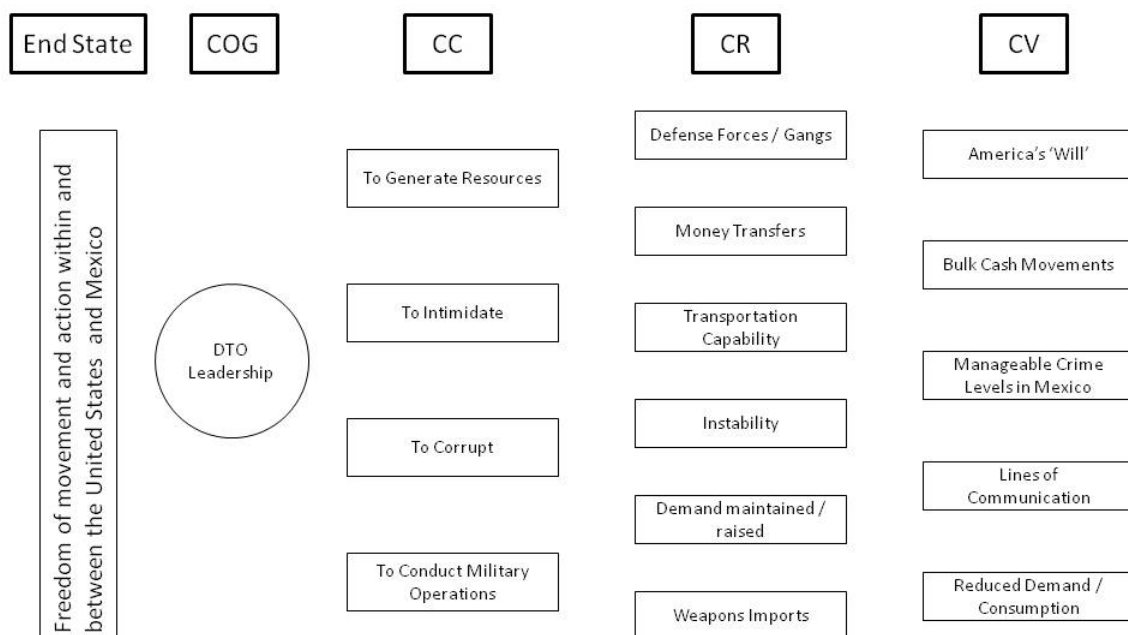


Figure 7. Drug Trafficking Organization CoG Analysis

Source: Created by author.

End State-The drug trafficking organizations ultimately seek freedom of movement and action within and between the U.S. and Mexico.

Center of Gravity-DTO leadership stands as the center of gravity for each of the major organizations.

Critical Capabilities-To Generate Resources--The illegal drug trade generates billions of dollars annually.

To Intimidate--Governmental Officials, Law enforcement officials, and much of society are intimidated into acquiescence to the DTOs.

To Corrupt--DTO resources offer tremendous leverage to corrupt opposition.

To Conduct Military Operations--DTOs have the organization, the training, and the equipment to conduct sophisticated military operations against other DTOs, law enforcement, and Mexican or American officials (Felbab-Brown 2009, 2).

Critical Requirements-Defense Forces or Gangs--Though the lines between them often blur, DTOs need gangs to protect their assets and project their power (Manwaring 2007, 27)

Money Transfers--Electronic and physical bulk cash smuggling provide the DTOs with substantial financial resources.

Transportation capability--DTOs must continue to control lines of communication for domestically produced and transitory drugs.

Instability--Society must continue to accept drug related crime and violence as normal, and remain indifferent to established legal authorities. This indifference contributes to the overall sense of lawlessness throughout the country (Overseas Security Advisory Council 2008, 1).

Demand Maintained or Raised--DTOs need a strong demand for illegal drugs as a purpose behind their operations.

Weapons Imports--DTOs require a steady flow of arms to equip their operational forces.

Critical Vulnerabilities--America's Will--*Most Critical* DTOs cannot overcome the united and coordinated application of the instruments of national power when supported by the American public.

Bulk Cash Movements--The worldwide financial network can be monitored through advanced information technology (Kem 2009, 81). This could identify DTO revenue streams via electronic means, and lead to seizure or interdiction of these assets. Elimination of bulk cash smuggling by physical means will then starve the DTOs of their most valuable resource.

Manageable Crime Levels in Mexico--If Mexico were able to establish a safe and secure society through an efficient and uncorrupted justice system, DTOs would lose territorial control, as well as the general states of instability required for freedom of action.

Lines of Communication--DTOs must maintain control of their lines of communication to transport drugs within Mexico. Governmental control of transport routes forces South American DTOs to use routes around, vice through Mexico, thereby reducing Mexican DTOs opportunity for revenue generation (Felbab-Brown 2009, 3).

Reduced Demand / Consumption--DTOs will lose tremendous wealth and power when nations enact successful drug education, treatment, and rehabilitation programs.

Accomplishing a CoG analysis from the DTO perspective proved relatively less complicated than from either Mexico or America's. Though they are generally solely motivated by, and operate out of self-interest, they all share a common end state-their continued freedom of action. While they frequently fight amongst and between themselves, employ dangerous and violent methods, and act in an apparently self-

defeating manner, their operations focus on sustaining and growing their own organizations. Their capabilities focus around revenue generation. Their supporting capabilities include intimidating the opposition, coercing those who cannot be intimidated, and eliminating those who resist coercion. These capabilities require a DTO friendly environment in which to operate: a quasi-ungoverned area, a large customer base, and the ability to provide their product to that customer base. Their requirements; however, have inherent weaknesses which can be exploited.

The U.S. can directly target four of five DTO vulnerabilities: America's will, bulk cash movements, demand reduction, and lines of communication. Additionally, it can assist with the final vulnerability: establishing manageable crime levels in Mexico. This level of influence should address not only the symptom of spillover violence, but the larger problem identified by the campaign planning model: High supplies and demand of illegal drugs in the U.S. All U.S. operations aimed at targeting these vulnerabilities hinge on one specific item: America's will. Without a full commitment from the U.S. to combating DTOs, half-measures taken heretofore will continue to show only modest success, but will not truly solve the problem.

Lines of Operation

To enact organized collective responses to strategic problems, America must develop and use a method to ensure individual components of the solution are not conceived, enacted, and allowed to evolve in relative isolation. Each component of the solution must be aligned toward achieving a specific end. In Campaign Planning, these components of the solution become strategic objectives. Each strategic objective should mark a significant step to achieving the end state.

Many strategic objectives relate to each other. They reinforce conditions which lead toward a similar goal. In Campaign Planning, these mutually reinforcing objectives are organized into lines of operation (LOOs). Kem, relying heavily on a monograph written by Major Mario A. Diaz, defines LOOs as:

The logical line of operation is a cognitive operational framework/planning construct used to define the concept of multiple, and often disparate, actions arranged in a framework unified by purpose. The actions and objectives in a logical line of operation depict causal relationships that are both linear and nonlinear. Operational objectives are depicted along a logical line of operation; the same operational objective may be depicted along more than one logical line of operation. All logical lines of operation should lead to the COG. (Kem 2009, 55-56)

When all objectives along the LOO are accomplished, the condition required of this LOO (a facet of the overall end state) should be satisfied.

The LOO provides a way to visualize and synchronize simultaneous, complex operations. The following figures focus effort on achieving specific objectives which incorporate points of emphasis identified by the CoG analyses. These objectives may apply to multiple LOOs which, when they are all successfully achieved, should lead to the desired end state (Kem 2009, 66-67).

United States Lines of Operation

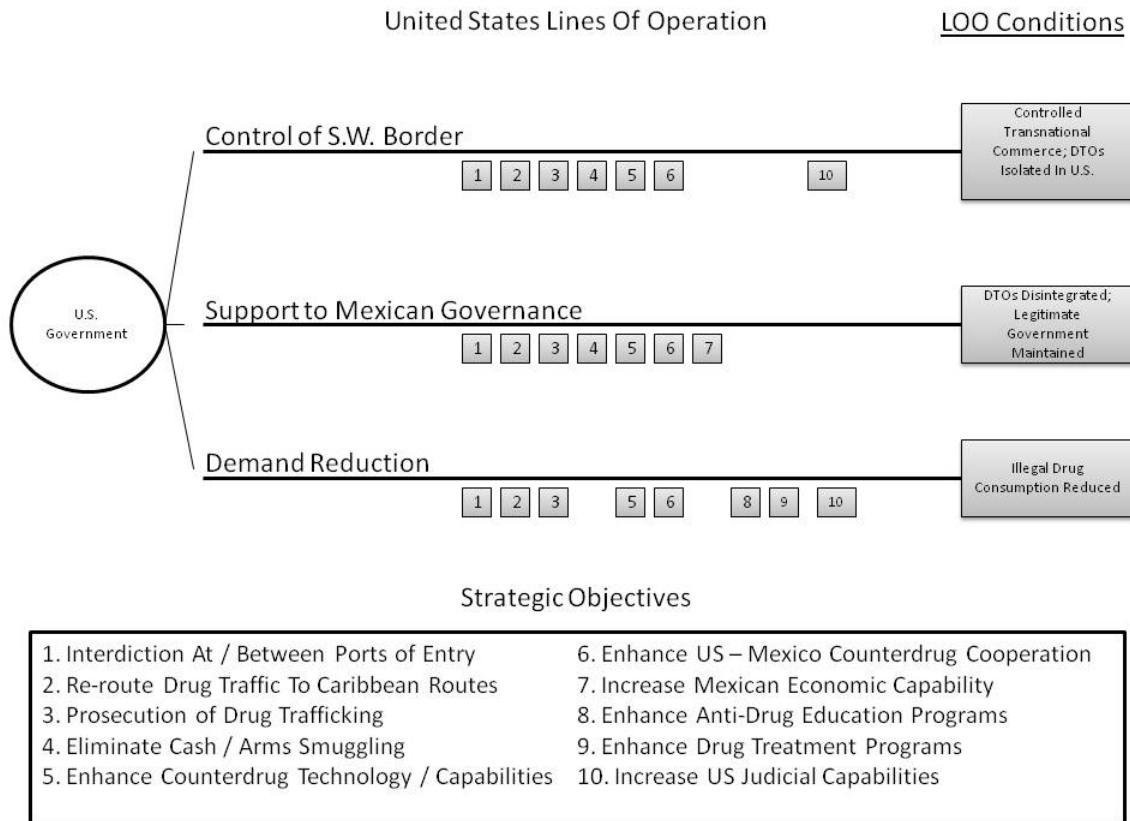


Figure 8. United States Lines Of Operation

Source: Created by author.

The U.S. has three lines of operation which protect U.S. and or Mexican vulnerabilities, harness the capabilities of each nation, and attack vulnerabilities of the drug trafficking organizations. Note that many strategic objectives which must be met contribute to multiple LOOs.

The first LOO, control of the southwest border, is the most important. This line of operation surpasses, but echoes the strategic goal of the U.S. government: to substantially reduce the flow of drugs, their proceeds, and their associated instruments of violence across the border (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 2). As noted

before, this LOO aligns perfectly with text contained in the strategy itself which states its intention to control the southwest border (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 9, 17).

The next line of operation is support to Mexican governance. The operative word is “support.” The U.S. must not attempt to impose its policies; it must productively engage the Mexican government which has demonstrated its willingness to address this problem. The Merida Initiative appears to be a step in the right direction. The stated objective of this \$1.6 billion program is “to maximize the effectiveness of our efforts to fight criminal organizations--so as to disrupt drug-trafficking (including precursor chemicals); weapons trafficking, illicit financial activities and currency smuggling, and human trafficking” (Cook 2008, 19). Due to Mexico’s concerns of encroachment upon its sovereignty by the U.S., the initiative avoids placing the U.S. in an advisory role on process improvement and capacity building. Rather, it focuses primarily on providing technology and equipment to Mexico (Felbab-Brown 2009, 19-21).

The final line of operation is focused on reducing the demand for illegal drugs. While this encompasses drug use prevention, education, treatment, and rehabilitation programs, it also includes supply reduction and punitive aspects. The strategic objectives listed for this LOO reflect this three-pronged approach. While the notion of supply reduction leading to demand reduction appears to contradict basic economic supply and demand theory, this is not the case with combating illegal drugs. According to the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board, “Demand reduction efforts cannot lead to success without substantially reducing the illicit drug supply: if drugs are readily available and easily accessible, new drug abusers will soon replace former ones” (United

Nations 1998, 3). In other words, reducing demand requires reducing supply. Thus, interdiction and demand reduction programs complement each other.

When reduced supply and drug use deterrence programs fail to dissuade participants in the illegal drug market, punitive elements must come into play. America must have the willingness, and the capacity to enforce the law, and prosecute offenders to the fullest extent. This final deterrent proves essential for success. Combined, these lines of operation offer America its best opportunity to achieve its desired end state.

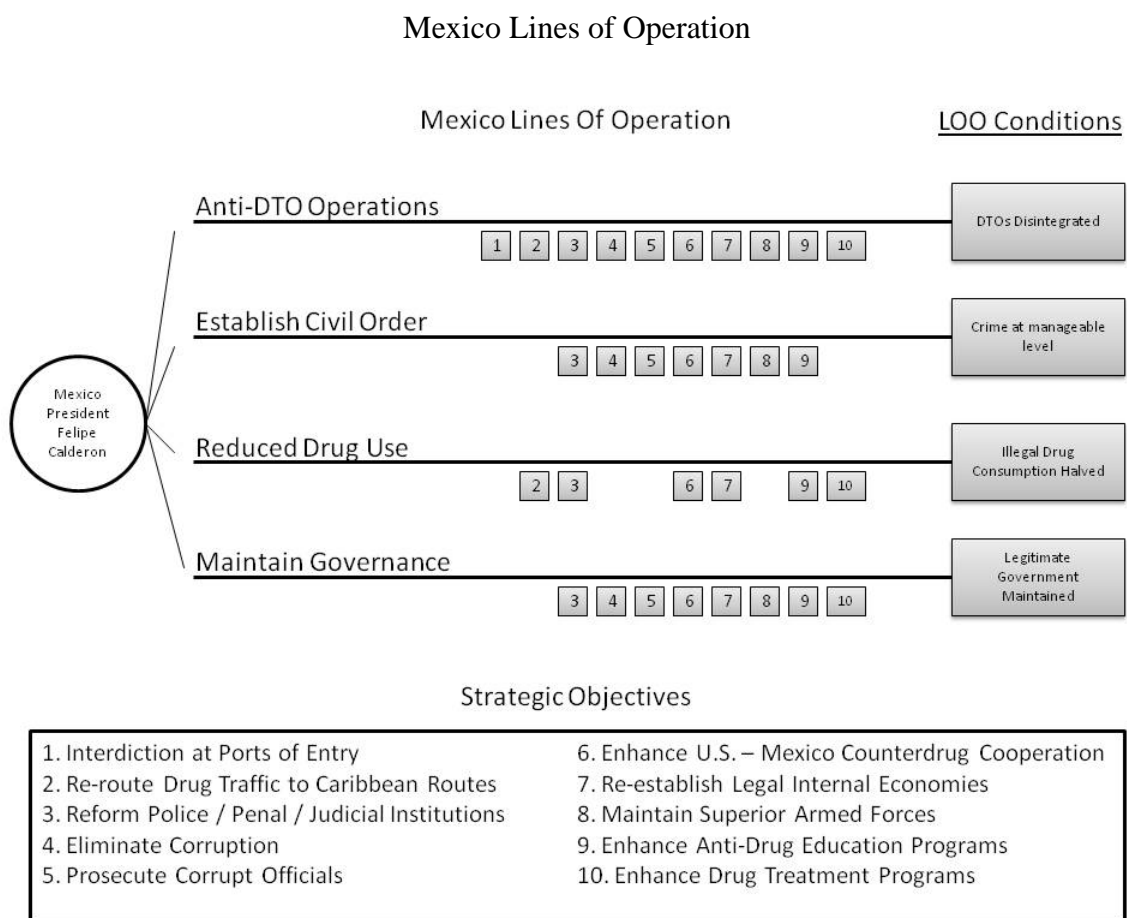


Figure 9. Mexico's Lines Of Operation

Source: Created by author.

As proposed above, Mexico would work toward its end state along four lines of operations. Three of four LOOs have a decidedly defensive slant, as the country focuses heavily on protecting its own critical vulnerabilities. Many strategic objectives serve dual roles of protection while simultaneously targeting a few DTO vulnerabilities, hence the Anti-DTO operations LOO. Again, most strategic objectives contribute to more than one line of operation.

The First LOO-Anti-DTO Operations, stands alone as the sole offensively-focused line. Note the difference between the first strategic objectives of the U.S. and Mexico. Interdiction between Ports of Entry is a U.S. objective due to its ability to commit resources to accomplish this task. In contrast, this is something Mexico would not realistically be able to accomplish. Mexico can and should; however, interdict arms and bulk cash shipments returning to the DTOs at these Ports of Entry.

Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora intends to break up the four major cartels into fifty or more smaller entities. He believes this will take away their military capability, as well as remove access to the large financial resources which allow them to wield such power (McCaffrey 2007, 8). While these results may prove true, the second and third-order effects of this action must be considered.

Evidence suggests two potential pitfalls of DTO fragmentation. First, as the Mexican Government has removed high level leaders of drug organizations over the past few years, the level of violence has increased. This violence comes from DTO retaliation against the state, as well as from competing organizations which sense opportunity to take advantage of a rival's weakness. Second, a situation similar to that experienced by Columbia could occur. Disabling the Cali and Medellin cartels enabled the growth of

their paramilitaries. These smaller groups assumed control of, and ultimately expanded the drug trade. These smaller DTOs also inhibited intelligence gathering operations taken against them (Felbab-Brown 2009, 10). Nevertheless, the Mexican government continues to aggressively confront the DTOs by deploying the Army and federal police across the country.

Establishing civil order as a second line of operation follows President Calderon's "Limpiemos Mexico campaign to clean up Mexico" (McCaffrey 2007, 8). Society has lost value in life and basic decency as a result of the decades of DTO actions. Governmental institutions have lost the trust of the people because these institutions cannot provide for their basic needs. Therefore, they garner little to no respect from the population. Reporting a crime is considered a waste of time as Mexican police, in general, are assumed to be corrupt (Overseas Security Advisory Council 2008, 3). The first step is to reform police and judicial institutions so they can provide the people a sense of security. "Good security is not only important on its own; it is also a necessary precondition for the success of counternarcotics policies" (Felbab-Brown 2009, 10).

To counter both real and perceived corruption, the government has purged and prosecuted hundreds of law enforcement officials, and is re-organizing its institutions. Of the many purged officials, the federal police commanders of all 31 Mexican states were relieved of their command. Institutional reforms include ballistics checks of police weapons, and polygraphs for all police officers (Cook 2008, 13-15). Eliminating local, state, and federal police corruption will prove a difficult task, but one that must be accomplished.

Mexico's third Line of Operation is to reduce drug use throughout the nation. As the drug trade expanded in Mexico, the drugs themselves became payment. This practice elevated the rate of drug consumption (Felbab-Brown 2009, 2). Not surprisingly, the primary area of concern is the U.S. border region where the rate for drug use is three times the national average (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 60). The nation must improve its drug prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs.

Finally, the Mexican government must operate in a manner which maintains its ability to govern. More simply put, the government must not overstep its bounds. Mexico finds itself in a precarious position. In his after action report, General McCaffrey quotes the Council on Hemispheric Affairs when he describes this tenuous situation. Corruption and infiltration of the highest levels is so pervasive that ultimate victory by the state remains uncertain (McCaffrey 2007, 7). This is a situation where accomplishing the right action in the wrong way can make the overall situation worse. For Mexico, the ends surely do not justify the ways.

For example, the Mexican armed forces are the vanguard for President Calderon's anti-DTO operations. While society holds little tolerance for the drug traffickers, they do not wholly support the Armed Forces. Allegations against them of human rights abuses, long-term detention without charge, searches without warrants, and civilian deaths have surfaced over the past two years (Felbab-Brown 2009, 20). Even if untrue, these allegations prove counterproductive to the president's course of action to clean up Mexico. Ultimately, they undermine society's perception of the state's legal authority.

The Calderon administration understands that it cannot reach its end state without assistance. It maintains that its efforts will fail without more U.S. support. As such, it has

requested increased U.S. assistance in reducing arms traffic, and stopping drug earnings from returning to Mexico, as well as reducing American demand for illegal drugs (Cook 21).

The administration understands that the staggering crime rate leads authorities to fail to prosecute or solve many drug crimes due to a lack of capacity (Cook 2008, 21). Its current approach is to extradite major drug traffickers to the U.S. for prosecution. Since 2001, up to 90,000 arrests have been made; however, the vast majority of them were of lower level drug traffickers, rather than DTO leadership (Felbab-Brown 2009, 19). As a result, the period between January 2006 and August 2007 saw only 127 people extradited to the U.S. on drug related charges (Cook 2008, 21). It is easier and safer to target low level traffickers than higher echelons with the cartels. Unfortunately, this success combating low-level traffickers has not significantly damaged the DTOs or reduced violence in Mexico, but has put an increased strain on Mexico's judicial and prison systems (Felbab-Brown 2009, 19).

Mexico faces a monumental challenge to achieve its end state. These lines of operation are the recipe for the nation's success. Unfortunately, it cannot reach its overall national objective single-handedly-Mexico must rely on significant contributions from the U.S. For Mexico to achieve its end state, the U.S. must also achieve its desired ends.

DTO Lines of Operation

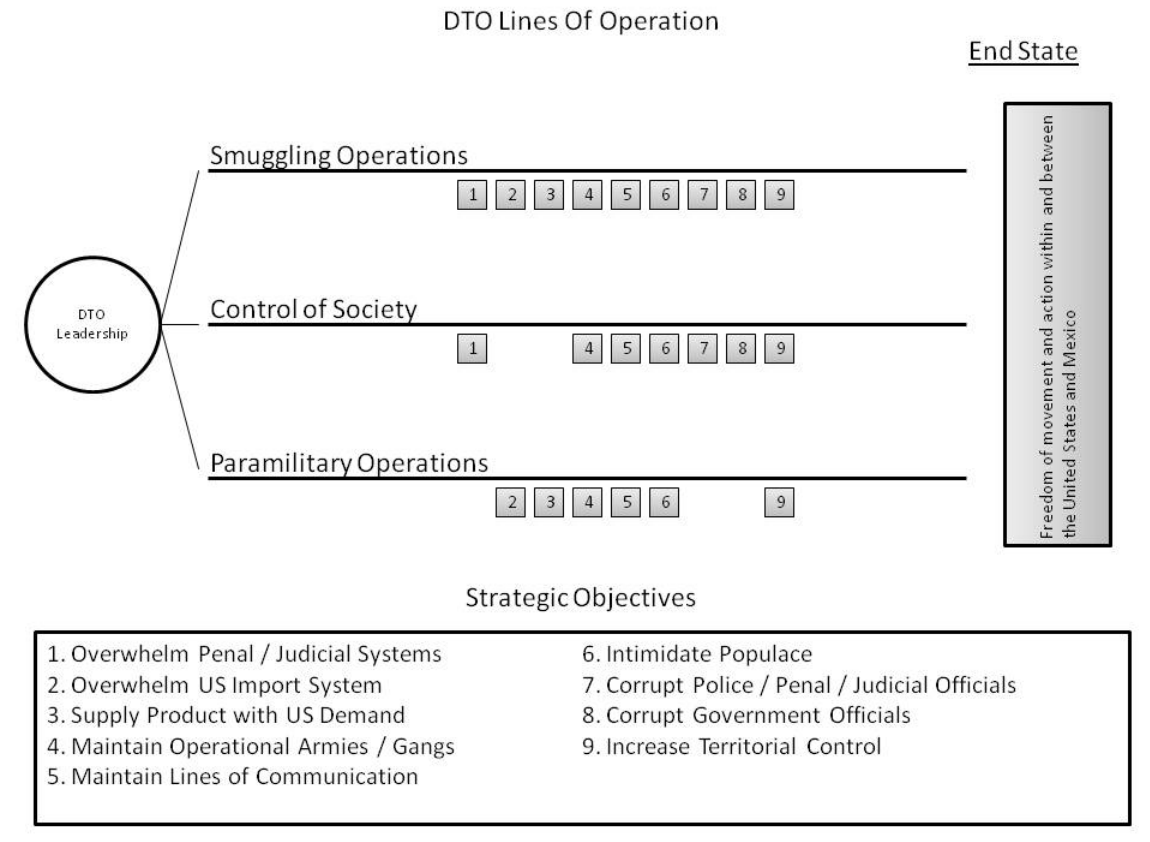


Figure 10. Drug Trafficking Organizations' Lines Of Operation

Source: Created by author.

Entering the mindset of the DTO proves to be challenging-it forces one into the realm of malevolent actor. However, it offers benefits. Looking at the strategic ends, ways, and means from the enemy's perspective offers insight. Identifying the enemy's critical vulnerabilities offers one an opportunity to most effectively counter. Knowing its lines of operation helps one to determine where, and toward what end the enemy has focused his efforts.

The LOO analysis above indicates that these organizations operate along three distinct operational lines: controlling society, smuggling operations, and paramilitary operations. They attack the identified critical vulnerabilities of both the U.S. and Mexico with vigor, while attempting to protect their own. Their Strategic Objectives focus upon what it takes to continue to run the “business” world of illegal drugs. The closely related nature of their operational lines leads to the singular end state of all drug trafficking organizations-freedom of action.

The first and most critical LOO concentrates on smuggling operations-the others act in supporting or enabling roles. This is the resource generating side of the business. While Mexico’s drug organizations are not a new phenomenon, they have seen an increase in stature as Columbia’s cartels have fallen. Over time, Mexican cartels shifted from their primary role as illegal drug transporter, to drug manufacturer and distributor. Mexican DTOs are the primary foreign source of America’s marijuana imports. In addition, they manufacture and supply the majority of methamphetamine and heroin consumed in the U.S. Closure of the route through Florida pushed cocaine trafficking to Mexico. Now, estimates indicate that 90 percent of the cocaine destined for America transits Mexico (Cook 2008, 4). Successfully delivering these products to market provides Mexican DTOs with their resources. This tremendous opportunity to control the drug trade with America brings Mexican cartels billions of dollars each year. Unchecked, this economic power provides the cartels the capability to control their own destinies.

The next LOO for drug organizations, controlling society, proves mutually reinforcing with the first LOO, smuggling operations. The more success experienced along one LOO, the easier operations become along the other. As seen throughout

Mexico, the government has failed to maintain its sovereignty. This created a vacuum in which DTOs and the government are competing for control. According to Manwaring, for DTOs to control society requires a, “Radical socio-economic-political restructuring of the state and its governance in accordance with criminal values” (Manwaring 2008, 4). This seems to have been the case in Mexico.

Over time, the Mexican government lost control. Traditionally, DTO leadership cut deals with state governors. These gentlemen’s agreements ensured that violence between traffickers occurred in “rough-and-tumble” (Grayson 2008) neighborhoods. Officials tolerated robbery, but not kidnapping; trafficking, but not homicide. A live-and-let-live mentality prevailed. By the end of the 1960s, however, the climate changed. DTOs, fueled by the opportunity for greater wealth, nullified their unwritten agreements with law enforcement and other officials. They acquired high-powered weapons, and began to target government officials and each other (Grayson 2008). The escalation of violence has not stopped since; with each succeeding act surpassing its predecessor in brutality.

Hal Brands, of the Strategic Studies Institute cites a difference between DTO violence of the past and present. Now, cartels and their gangs’ violent attacks are aimed at more than just physically affecting police, military, and government forces; they psychologically aim for the public at large. They intend to sow fear in society and demonstrate that the drug organizations control Mexico, not the government. The DTOs openly defy the government by demonstrating their ability to kill anyone at any time (Brands 2009, 10-11). This psychological warfare complements the other components of societal control.

Under DTO rule, crime and violence are the norm. Elites are now targets of extortion, kidnapping has markedly risen, and the rates of robbery and murder have jumped dramatically. Journalists covering the drug violence have become targets themselves. Citizens avoid leaving home at night out of fear of robbery or being caught in a cross fire. Most of the violence occurs along drug transportation routes, but few areas have escaped violence due to societal breakdown (Felbab-Brown 2009, 1).

Widespread poverty, unemployment, and endemic corruption of local, state, and federal officials hinder the Mexican government. DTOs seek to capitalize upon these opportunities. Corruption has become so common that position in government continues to be viewed as an avenue toward personal gain, rather than public service. For example, one must examine the mindset of a politician who, after being elected to a federal deputy position, told the citizens of his home-town to “take a good look at my face because you are never going to see it again in this flyspecked, chicken-shit little village” (Brands 2009, 15). This sentiment helps drug organizations perpetuate the cycle of corruption in government.

The Final Line of Operation orients around paramilitary operations. The DTOs need established defense forces to protect the organization, its territory, and its product. These forces typically have organization, discipline, and arms (Manwaring 2007, 26). Among the most notable of these organizations are the Zetas.

The Zetas are the premium paramilitary wing of Mexico’s DTOs. This group, aligned with the Gulf Cartel, initially consisted of 31 deserters from Mexico’s elite counternarcotics units-the Airborne Special Forces. They maintained their combat expertise, and established training camps in order to develop new recruits with more

passive backgrounds into elite mercenaries. The group wields a variety of weapons to include the AK-47s, MP-5s, AR-15s, P-90 submachine guns, grenade launchers, IEDs, 50 caliber machine guns, and helicopters. Thomas Mangan of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives claims, “You’re looking at the same firepower here on the border that our soldiers are facing in Iraq and Afghanistan” (Baram 2008). The gang’s effectiveness and notoriety placed them and their employer among the Mexican Government’s primary targets.

Among the recruits trained by the Zetas, is a DTO now known as La Familia. The group was initially aligned with the Gulf Cartel, then turned vigilante, intent on cleaning up the Mexican state of Michoacán. Over time, the organization grew significantly (estimated 3,500 to 4,000 members) and discarded its past associations. Now, it is violently outspoken in its intent to take over traditionally Sinaloa controlled drug trafficking routes from Central Mexico to the U.S. in order to gain larger control of the drug trade (Grayson 2009).

As an example of how widespread the operations of these DTOs have spread north of the Border, on 22 October 2009, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holdren announced the arrest of 303 La Familia members nationwide. The two-day takedown culminated “Operation Coronado,” a 44 month multi-agency law enforcement investigation. Law enforcement officials seized \$3.4 million, 729 pounds of methamphetamine, 62 kilograms of cocaine, 967 pounds of marijuana, 144 weapons, and 109 vehicles across nineteen states (Reuters 2009). This operation against a single DTO demonstrates the widespread impact of paramilitary operations.

The DTOs have the greatest opportunity to achieve their end state. They do not desire to govern Mexico, they desire an overall lack of governance. These entities are largely unregulated, unbridled, revenue-focused businesses. In addition, they collectively seek to continue an already established situation. By building upon proven methods to target the most critical vulnerabilities of both the U.S. (Lack of Commitment, and the Uncontrolled Border) and Mexico (Internal Insecurity), they have a high probability of strategic success.

After analyzing the centers of gravity and lines of operation from the perspective of the U.S., Mexico, and the drug trafficking organizations, several important points to strategic problem solving became clear. Chapter 5 will offer recommendations and conclusions of the analysis completed in chapter 4. It also answers this study's primary question: How can the U.S. improve its strategy to combat drug-related spillover violence?

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Those who argue that instability, chaos, and conflict are the results of poverty, injustice, corruption, and misery may well be right. We must remember, however, that individual men and women are prepared to kill and to destroy and to maim, and, perhaps, to die in the process, to achieve their self determined ideological and/or commercial objectives. In the end, Zbigniew Brzezinski's reminder is useful: "Behind almost every [violent] act lurks a political problem.

— Dr. Max Manwaring, *A Contemporary Challenge to Sovereignty*

Conclusions

The previous chapter analyzed the gathered information using Kem's Campaign Planning method. Center of gravity analyses identified the desired end states, the centers of gravity and the most important capabilities, requirements and vulnerabilities of the U.S., Mexico, and the drug trafficking organizations. This ends-ways-means-vulnerabilities analysis offers valuable insight to problem solving. Lines of operation analyses followed. These figures outline where and how efforts should be focused to attack an enemy's vulnerabilities while protecting one's own. This study answers the primary research question: How can the U.S. improve its strategy to counter border spillover violence? The answer, as identified by the Campaign Planning model, has two critical and mutually reinforcing parts: America's commitment to control the border in order to reduce illegal drug supplies, and demand reduction.

U.S. Commitment to Border Control

Mexican drug trafficking organizations have continually demonstrated their capability and willingness to coerce, corrupt, or kill anyone who opposes them. These

actions demonstrate the complete commitment of these organizations to reach their end state. More succinctly, “Mexico is not confronting dangerous criminality---it is fighting for survival against narco-terrorism” (McCaffrey 2007, 4).

Sharing a similarly total, yet contrary commitment, Mexican President Felipe Calderon has described the increasing drug violence as a threat to the Mexican state (Cook 2008, 17). Top administration officials, and tens of thousands of courageous Mexican Armed Forces and law enforcement personnel place their lives on the line by remaining committed to Calderon’s long-term campaign to clean up Mexico (McCaffrey 2007, 8). While this menace threatens Mexican sovereignty, Mexico’s current administration appears up for the challenge.

On the other hand, America’s more subdued approach has had limited effects. Agency re-organization, fluctuating, but ultimately limited public interest, token increases to the Border Patrol, and insulting political disputes mark America’s response (McCaffrey 2007, 4). With evidence supporting them, critics of America’s “War on Drugs” speak loudly of its failure. As asked in chapter 1, why is America’s approach different?

Simply put, America suffers from the absence of commitment. The National southwest border counternarcotics strategy mentions gaining control of the southwest border only one time. Additionally, border control is not stated one of the nation’s strategic objectives, let alone part of its overall strategic goal (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 17). Burying, thus ignoring this critical solution to the problem guarantees the problem’s continued existence. This is evidence of the U.S.

government's continued lack of commitment to solve this problem. Controlling the border requires commitment, without which, America's "War on Drugs" will surely fail.

While the comprehensive National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy advocates myriad programs and approaches, it equivocates when it discusses how to, "achieve the goal of protecting our borders" (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 9). As cited in the previous paragraph, the strategy directly stated it wanted to control the border. So which is the case: Is America *trying to protect* the border, or will America *control* it? These mark two drastically different conditions and levels of effort. Two questions arise from the strategy's conflicting statements. First, one must again ask about its published strategies: "Are these goals America is reaching for, or are they objectives it will meet." More importantly, and certainly more telling, would be the answer to the following question: "Does America truly desire to control the Southwest border?" If so, will it commit to reaching this very important end?

This study identified a component of America's end state as *controlling* the border, not closing it. The economies of the U.S. and Mexico are interconnected and interdependent. Closing the border runs counter to the interests of both nations and would only damage international relations. This objective offers many more benefits than merely ending the flow of illegal drugs. First and foremost to this study, spillover violence overall would greatly subside.

More importantly for Mexico, the canalized drug trafficking route to the U.S. through Mexico would close. This would effectively reroute drug trafficking outside of Mexico. As a result, both Mexican and South American DTOs would be forced to find alternative routes around Mexico to deliver their products. While this rerouting effect

would not solve the overall drug problem, it would greatly benefit Mexico as Mexican DTOs would suffer a tremendous reduction in resource generation capability. Given this condition, controlling the border could stand as the single greatest enabler to President Calderon's "Limpiemos Mexico" operation.

Controlling the border at and between ports of entry would also include interdiction of arms and bulk cash smuggling. Regarding border arms smuggling, General (Ret) McCaffrey states:

It is hard to understand the seeming indifference and incompetence of US authorities at state and Federal level to such callous disregard for a national security threat to a neighboring democratic state. We would consider it an act of warfare from a sanctuary state if we were the victim. (McCaffrey 2008, 7)

While the amount of arms smuggled across the border to DTOs can be disputed, there is no doubt that some weapons acquired north of the border are used by drug traffickers both in Mexico, and in the spillover violence in America.

Additionally, overall illegal immigration would also be significantly reduced. As societal elites, who are targets of the DTOs in Mexico would remain in their homeland, they would have a vested interest in, as well as the resources to improve the economy, society, and overall stability of the nation. These individuals would help solve Mexico's problems, rather than flee from them; thereby leaving positive lasting effects for future generations. Not only would this reduce spillover violence in America, it would lead to a stronger, more stable Mexico.

Finally, as the primary conduit to the U.S. closes, controlling the border would drastically reduce drug supplies in America. While Mexican DTOs produce some methamphetamine and marijuana in the U.S. (Cook 2008, 5), as they lose access to the border, they would gradually become isolated from their sources. Substantially reduced

drug availability offers America its most effective opportunity to enact successful demand reduction programs. This combination of lower supply and reduced demand in America would generate the greatest possible economic pressure upon Mexican DTOs.

Demand Reduction in the United States

While the above conclusion addresses the most significant method to reduce spillover violence and America's illegal drug supply (spillover's root cause), it also assists this study's second method to solve these problems: demand reduction. Drug addiction afflicts the world. The U.S. is a leading consumer on a global scale, and it is the primary consumer of illegal drugs which transit the southwest border. Thus, demand reduction in the U.S. plays a pivotal and reinforcing part in solving America's spillover violence problem and its overall illegal drug problem.

The United Nations declares that, at the national level, supply reduction and demand reduction efforts cannot be separated (United Nations International Narcotics Control Board 1998, 3). Like the legs of a world-class sprinter, supply reduction and demand reduction each must be developed simultaneously and symmetrically; each must provide powerful and equal effects for success. One without the other is worthless.

The majority of the policies enacted by government, and strategy approaches suggested by non-governmental groups align with the United Nations' statement above. Most cite demand reduction in America as an integral component to combating DTOs and drug violence (U.S. Cook 2008, 21). As shown by the 2009 National Drug Control Strategy, the U.S. also purports to understand the importance of this emphasis. Two of its three chapters are focused on this very subject. Current drug abuse prevention and treatment programs claim successes in lowering the number of first time drug users,

significantly reducing youth drug use, and increasing awareness of the physical and social consequences of drug use (National Drug Control Strategy 2009, 5).

In his 2009 letter to the U.S. Congress introducing his final drug control strategy, former President Bush spoke of his Administration's, "commitment [since 2002] to turn the tide against a problem that truly threatens everything good about our country" (National Drug Control Strategy 2009). Again, we see the importance of, and the declaration of U.S. government commitment. With open acknowledgement of this commitment to both supply and demand reduction efforts, one must ask why spillover violence spreads across America. A partial explanation is offered by the United Nations when it states:

The success of demand reduction programmes depends on two factors: the political will of Governments to tackle the problem, as evidenced by, among other things, the provision of the necessary financial resources; and the community's willingness to cooperate. Without following "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches simultaneously, it is not realistic to expect positive results from demand reduction programmes. (United Nations International Narcotics Control Board 1998, 4)

This appears to identify the largest stumbling block to successful demand reduction efforts-America's total willingness to act.

Unanswered Questions

Instead of answering the two direct questions asked of him during a press conference, President Obama obfuscated. While he foreshadowed his administration's counternarcotics strategy, he did not address the two most important aspects of the problem to military members: whether border violence spillover poses a threat to national security, and whether military forces will deploy to defend America from this violence? These questions, however, were later (indirectly) answered with the first sentence of the

National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy which states: “Drug trafficking across the Southwest border remains an acute threat to our homeland security and one of the top drug control priorities for the U.S.” (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 1).

This statement calls the “situation” along the southwest border not a threat to *national* security, but a threat to *homeland* security. The strategy further directs National Guard troops to provide support via Governor’s State Plans (Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2009, 60). These distinctions all but eliminate active duty and National Guard personnel from the President’s call to action. The strategy’s opening statement also assigns a level of importance to the “situation.” Qualifying it as, “*one* of the top,” drug control priorities, this administration follows numerous predecessors by prioritizing drug trafficking across the southwest border behind an untold number of more important illegal drug related problems.

This “situation” threatens Mexico’s sovereignty, yet garners underwhelming U.S response. The U.S. military, however, recognizes this threat and understands its importance. The U.S. Joint Forces Command issued a report which states: “Any descent by Mexico into chaos would demand an American response based on the serious implications for homeland security alone” (United States Joint Forces Command 2008, 36). While the President sounded as if he called the U.S. to action, he clearly does not intend to fully commit. The National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy confirms this assessment.

Recommendations

This study finds particular value in Kem's Campaign Planning problem solving methods. While oriented toward solving military-related problems at the operational level of war, it possesses inherent flexibility to adapt to, and incorporate all the circumstances of non-military, strategic level problems. It incorporates and focuses military, interagency, and intergovernmental problem solving efforts.

When discussing the definition of the National Strategic End State, Kem quotes Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operations Planning*, as saying, "Some national objectives... require a more balanced use of all instruments of national power (Kem 2009, 17). This study agrees with this statement, and feels it applies to America's border "situation."

The U.S. government must end political gamesmanship and partisan ideological arguments. In their press conferences, published documents, and legislation, America's leaders must say what they mean, and mean what they say. Finally, America must demonstrate commitment to following its own strategies. It must commit to solving this strategic problem by using all the instruments of national power available.

Final Conclusion

The "situation" in Mexico offers America a unique glimpse into its own future. The seeds have already been sown. Border patrol officers confront heavily armed drug traffickers; murders and kidnappings of Americans (or their relatives) with drug connections have spiked. Illegal immigrants are forced to smuggle drugs, or are kidnapped and held for ransom. Phoenix, Arizona, now ranks second in the world for kidnapping, and DTOs battle for turf in major U.S. cities. Without doubt, drug violence

has spilled across the border. Countered only by half-measures, the growing “situation” in America will get worse.

Using the methods described in Kem’s monograph, *Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade*, this study was able to determine several important factors of the southwest border spillover violence problem. Applying this military oriented, operational level problem solving technique to a strategic level problem uncovered critical strategic vulnerabilities of the U.S.: its uncontrolled border with Mexico, and its lack of commitment to solving this “situation.”

The Campaign planning method also identified lines of operation along which the means should focus their efforts. Of particular note, successfully achieving the strategic objectives associated with America’s first LOO (control of the southwest border) satisfies that LOOs conditions for success. Achieving these objectives would also assist in satisfying all remaining LOO conditions, and satisfy or enable all three conditions of the U.S end state. With true commitment, rather than continued lip service, the U.S. can achieve this end state.

Summarizing the ‘situation’ in Campaign Planning terms: the combined American government and populace (The Means) must truly generate commitment to gain control of the southwest border in order to shore up their most critical vulnerability. The marriage of supply reduction and demand reduction (A Way) provides the American government (The CoG) the ability to isolate drug trafficking organizations in the U.S., while keeping the border open and controlled, and securing the legitimacy of the constitutionally established government of Mexico (The End State).

GLOSSARY

Drug Trafficking Organization. For purists, this phrase supplants drug cartel. While drug cartel remains the common phrase used in the press, experts disagree with its use specifically because the term ‘cartel’ refers to an organization which establishes prices. It remains unclear whether Mexican DTOs set illegal drug prices.

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